

SOUTH CHINA SEA NEWS No.108
August 2022

ACTS OF CLAIMANTS

30 August 2022: Chinese Hackers Tied to Attacks on South China Sea Energy Firms

Chinese hackers likely targeted energy companies operating in the South China Sea and the Australian government, according to a US tech security firm, the latest accusation of coordinated cybersnooping by the Asian nation to advance its geopolitical goals. Researchers uncovered an ongoing phishing campaign lasting more than a year that has been aimed at projects including the Kasawari gas field and a wind farm in the Taiwan Strait, Proofpoint Inc. said in a report on Tuesday. The gas project is in Malaysian waters and operated by Petroliam Nasional Bhd., which declined to comment on the research report.

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2022-08-30/chinese-hackers-tied-to-attacks-on-south-china-sea-energy-firms>

30 August 2022: Chinese minister hopes Philippines will revive talks on oil, gas deals in South China Sea

A Chinese minister has expressed hope for the revival of talks with the Philippines on oil and gas exploration in the South China Sea, without undermining each other's claims in the disputed waterway. Liu Jianchao, head of the Communist Party's diplomatic arm, the International Liaison Department, told reporters in Manila last weekend that the discussions could continue if both sides showed "some kind of flexibility". "It seems that there are some legal barriers or legal factors that are standing in the way of a final consensus," said Liu, who previously served as the Chinese ambassador to the Philippines. "I hope that both sides will move about this issue in a way that is feasible and practical so that the cooperation could be continued and realised."

<https://www.scmp.com/week-asia/politics/article/3190672/chinese-minister-hopes-philippines-will-revive-talks-oil-gas>

29 August 2022: OVL gets another 2-yr extension for Vietnamese oil block in South China Sea

India's flagship overseas firm ONGC Videsh Ltd has got the seventh extension to explore for oil and gas in a Vietnamese block in the contested waters of the South China Sea, officials said. OVL, the overseas arm of state-owned Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC), has secured extension of the exploration phase upto June 15, 2023, they said.

https://www.business-standard.com/article/pti-stories/ovl-gets-another-2-yr-extension-for-vietnamese-oil-block-in-south-china-sea-122082800272_1.html

27 August 2022: World Meteorological Organization removes China's 'nine-dash line' after Vietnam's request

The World Meteorological Organization (WMO) has removed the "nine-dash line" from a heatwave map posted on its Facebook page. The UN organization on Saturday edited its post about the ongoing heatwaves in China and removed the "nine-dash line" while only showing the mainland part of the country.

<https://theprint.in/world/world-meteorological-organization-removes-chinas-nine-dash-line-after-vietnams-request/1102927/>

26 August 2022: China's aircraft carrier conducts combat drills with full battle group in South China Sea amid Taiwan tensions

A Chinese aircraft carrier, which raised eyebrows by undergoing overhaul and upgrades just over two years after its launch, held combat drills in the South China Sea with its full battle group, consisting of a flotilla of naval ships, including a nuclear submarine, as Beijing ratcheted tensions over Taiwan.

<https://www.thehindu.com/news/international/chinas-aircraft-carrier-conducts-combat-drills-with-full-battle-group-in-south-china-sea-amid-taiwan-tensions/article65815452.ece>

24 August 2022: Chinese coast guards rescue Vietnamese fisherman in South China Sea

Chinese coast guard vessel 5103 rendezvoused with Vietnamese coast guard vessel 9003 on Tuesday morning, successfully completing the handover of a Vietnamese fisherman rescued by the China coast guards, according to media reports.

<https://www.globaltimes.cn/page/202208/1273723.shtml>

16 August 2022: Fishing vessels head for the South China Sea after moratorium ended

new fishing season kicks off in the South China Sea after 3.5-month annual summer fishing moratorium ended at noon on August 16. Hundreds of fishing vessels from South China's Guangdong and East China's Fujian set sail deep into the sea.

<https://www.globaltimes.cn/page/202208/1273127.shtml>

14 August 2022: Chinese customs seize thousands of maps over missing South China Sea 'nine-dash line'

Customs officials in China's eastern Zhejiang province have seized thousands of maps intended for export because the national borders represented did not conform to Chinese territorial claims in the South China and East China seas. Ningbo city customs authorities said the two batches of "problematic maps", numbering 23,500 in all, omitted the nine-dash line covering Beijing's vast claims in the South China Sea that extend as far as 2,000km (1,200 miles) from the Chinese mainland. The maps also failed to include contested island chains claimed by China, such as the Spratlys and the Paracels in the South China Sea, as well as the uninhabited East China Sea islands called the Diaoyus – claimed by Japan as the Senkaku.

<https://www.scmp.com/news/china/politics/article/3188854/chinese-customs-seize-thousands-maps-over-missing-south-china>

14 August 2022: Chinese military carries out South China Sea minesweeping drill

The People's Liberation Army Navy carried out a five-day minesweeping drill in the South China Sea, the Southern Theatre Command said on Friday. The mission was conducted by a minesweeping brigade that included the Type 082-II minesweepers Hejian and Chishui, according to a statement by the PLA. It appears this is the first maritime training exercise Hejian has taken part in since it entered service. It is the fourth consecutive month that the navy carried out minesweeping drills, which would be a key task in the event of conflict in the Taiwan Strait.

<https://news.abs-cbn.com/overseas/08/14/22/chinese-military-carries-out-south-china-sea-minesweeping-drill>

11 August 2022: Manila backs Senate bill to officially rename contested waters 'West Philippine Sea'

The Philippine foreign office said Thursday it was backing legislative efforts to formally rename the country's portions of the South China Sea as the "West Philippine Sea," in a move to bolster Manila's territorial claims in the contested waterway.

<https://www.rfa.org/english/news/china/philippines-southchinasea-08112022165725.html>

9 August 2022: PLA to conduct live-fire exercises in South China Sea

The Chinese military is scheduled to carry out live-fire exercises in the South China Sea from Tuesday to Thursday, according to the Guangdong Provincial Maritime Safety Administration. The administration said in a navigational warning published on its website that the exercises would take place from 8 am to 6 pm each day. It released the geographical coordinates of the drill zone, asking civilian ships to avoid entering the area.

<https://www.chinadaily.com.cn/a/202208/09/WS62f202f8a310fd2b29e71310.html>

6 August 2022: Chinese FM expounds on China's stance on South China Sea issue

Chinese State Councilor and Foreign Minister Wang Yi on Friday expounded on China's stance on the South China Sea issue and refuted the so-called concerns the United States has expressed over the issue. He made the remarks at the 12th East Asia Summit Foreign Ministers' Meeting in Phnom Penh, Cambodia. Wang said China's position on the South China Sea issue is supported by abundant historical and legal basis.

<https://english.news.cn/20220806/3f86f18cde6a4c31bc50f72f006117de/c.html>

5 August 2022: Furious China fires missiles near Taiwan in drills after Pelosi visit

China deployed scores of planes and fired live missiles near Taiwan on Thursday in its biggest drills in the Taiwan Strait, a day after U.S. House of Representatives Speaker Nancy Pelosi made a solidarity trip to the self-ruled island.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/suspected-drones-over-taiwan-cyber-attacks-after-pelosi-visit-2022-08-04/>

2 August 2022: China Plans Four Days of Military Drills in Areas Encircling Taiwan

China will conduct large-scale military drills and missile tests around Taiwan in a defiant show of force after House speaker Nancy Pelosi became the highest-ranking US politician to land on the island in a quarter century.

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2022-08-02/china-announces-military-drills-encircling-taiwan-from-aug-4-7-16cc51jn>

ASEAN AND SOUTH CHINA SEA

8 August 2022: PH asserts South China Sea arbitral award during 55th ASEAN ministers' meet

The Philippines has asserted its arbitral award in the South China Sea during the 55th Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) foreign ministers' meeting and related meetings in Phnom Penh, Cambodia, the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) said on Monday.

<https://globalnation.inquirer.net/205938/ph-asserts-scs-arbitral-award-during-55th-asean-ministers-meet-to-host-east-asia-summit#ixzz7bWEImQtW>

5 August 2022: ASEAN raises concern over China's land reclamations in South China Sea

Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) has raised concern over China's land reclamations activities in the South China Sea. "We discussed the situation in the South China Sea, during which concerns were expressed by some Ministers on the land reclamations, activities, serious incidents in the area, including damage to the marine environment, which have eroded trust and confidence, increased tensions, and may undermine peace, security, and stability in the region," ASEAN joint statement said.

<https://theprint.in/world/asean-raises-concern-over-chinas-land-reclamations-in-south-china-sea/1071267/>

4 August 2022: Cooperation key to peace in South China Sea: ASEAN foreign ministers

The foreign ministers of Việt Nam and other ASEAN countries reiterated their stance on maintaining the South China Sea as a sea of peace and cooperation on Thursday in Phnom Penh, Cambodia. This is the consensus reached by the regional diplomats at the ongoing ASEAN Foreign Ministers' Meeting and related meetings between ASEAN and its partners.

https://www.einnews.com/pr_news/584418966/cooperation-key-to-peace-in-south-china-sea-asean-foreign-ministers

4 August 2022: ASEAN FMs call for peaceful settlement to South China Sea issue

In a press conference yesterday evening, Kung Phoak, Spokesperson of the 55th ASEAN Ministers' Meeting and Related Meetings, said, "Regarding the South China Sea issue, the meeting asked all parties to resolve the issue peacefully and with constructive participation based on universally accepted norms, principles and laws." "The 1982 UNCLOS promotes the effective implementation of the DOC and expedites negotiations on the COC as soon as possible and recognizes that the sea South China has become a very competitive area, making it difficult," the spokesperson said.

<https://www.khmertimeskh.com/501125572/asean-fms-call-for-peaceful-settlement-to-south-china-sea-issue/>

1 August 2022: ASEAN targets new progress in South China Sea code by yearend — draft communique

The Association of Southeast Asian Nations is targeting new progress this year in the completion of a much delayed code of conduct with China to prevent armed confrontations in the disputed South China Sea, according to a draft communique of the group seen Monday by GMA News Online. Completion of the code, which has been supported by the United States and other Western and Asian governments not involved in the territorial conflicts, has been delayed by the slow pace of negotiations and two years of pandemic lockdowns.

<https://www.gmanetwork.com/news/topstories/nation/840130/asean-targets-new-progress-in-south-china-sea-code-by-yearend-draft-communique/story/>

1 August 2022: South China Sea discussion likely at ASEAN meetings, say experts

According to the Philippine News Agency (PNA), Foreign Affairs Secretary Enrique Manalo would lead the Philippine delegation at the 55th Asean Foreign Ministers' Meeting and related meetings, from August 2 to 6 in Phnom Penh, Cambodia.

<https://www.khmertimeskh.com/501122899/south-china-sea-discussion-likely-at-asean-meetings-say-experts/>

1 August 2022: Myanmar, South China Sea to Divide, Dominate ASEAN Summit

Foreign Ministers from the 10-member Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) will try and thrash out their differences, ranging from the conflict in Myanmar, to the disputed South China Sea, to admitting East Timor to the bloc, when they meet in Phnom Penh, Cambodia this week.

<https://www.voanews.com/a/myanmar-south-china-sea-to-divide-and-dominate-asean-summit-/6681888.html>

OTHER STATES AND SOUTH CHINA SEA

29 August 2022: Aotearoa New Zealand Conducts Rare Patrol in South China Sea

A Royal New Zealand Air Force (RNZAF) P-3K2 Orion undertook a rare surveillance flight over the South China Sea last week. The Orion involved, NZ4202, is one of only three Orions

that remain in RNZAF service pending the arrival of the P-8A. During its two day-patrol (August 24th-26th) the Orion supported HMNZS Aotearoa, which was transiting the South China Sea en route to Singapore for maintenance. While the RNZAF hasn't commented on where the P-3K2 was based during the patrols, ADSB data indicates that the aircraft likely made use of Clark Air Base in the Philippines.

<https://www.overtdefense.com/2022/08/29/aotearoa-new-zealand-conducts-rare-patrol-in-south-china-sea/>

28 August 2022: US warships transit Taiwan Strait, first since Pelosi visit

Two US Navy warships sailed through the Taiwan Strait on Sunday, the first such operation since the unprecedented Chinese military drills around the Taiwan, held in response to US House Speaker Nancy Pelosi's visit to the self-governed island earlier this month.

<https://www.hindustantimes.com/world-news/us-warships-transit-taiwan-strait-first-since-pelosi-visit-101661680036176.html>

25 August 2022: Australia to continue South China Sea patrols despite efforts to improve relations with Beijing

Australia has said it will continue military patrols in the South China Sea, a move diplomatic analysts said was likely to complicate efforts to improve relations with China. "Our operations haven't changed, it is still business as usual for us," Australian air force chief Robert Chipman said, according to ABC News. He added the Australian Defence Force was "well equipped" for its operations in the South China Sea.

<https://www.scmp.com/news/china/diplomacy/article/3190010/australia-continue-south-china-sea-patrols-despite-efforts>

21 August 2022: Conflict in the South China Sea threatens 90% of Australia's fuel imports: study

China's sabre-rattling around Taiwan underlines the need for Australia to be prepared for conflict in the South China Sea. With its growing navy and air force, and the bases it has built throughout the area, China is increasingly capable of disrupting shipping lanes crucial to Australia's exports and imports.

<https://theconversation.com/conflict-in-the-south-china-sea-threatens-90-of-australias-fuel-imports-study-188148>

12 August 2022: US, Indonesia, Australia hold drills amid China concerns

Soldiers from the U.S., Indonesia and Australia joined a live-fire drill on Friday, part of annual joint combat exercises on Sumatra island amid growing Chinese maritime activity in the Indo-Pacific region. A total of more than 5,000 personnel from the U.S., Indonesia, Australia, Japan and Singapore are participating in this year's Super Garuda Shield exercises, making them the largest since they began in 2009.

<https://www.startribune.com/us-indonesia-australia-hold-drills-amid-china-concerns/600197726/>

8 August 2022: Australia Says Nation's Prosperity In Danger Due To Beijing's Hold Across South China Sea

As long as China remains omnipresent in the South China Sea, Australia's "prosperity" is in jeopardy, according to acting prime minister Richard Marles. While the Australian prime minister, Anthony Albanese, is on vacation, the deputy prime minister and defence minister says we must remain focused on our national interests in the face of growing Chinese influence.

<https://www.republicworld.com/world-news/australia/australia-says-nations-prosperity-in-danger-due-to-beijings-hold-across-south-china-sea-articleshow.html>

7 August 2022: US will defend Philippines if attacked in South China Sea: Blinken

US Secretary of State Antony Blinken assured the Philippines on Saturday that the United States would come to its defense if attacked in the South China Sea, seeking to allay concerns about the extent of the US commitment to a mutual defense treaty. In meetings in Manila dominated by discussion on simmering US-China tensions over the Taiwan visit of US House of Representatives Speaker Nancy Pelosi, Blinken said a 70-year-old defense pact with the Philippines was "ironclad." "An armed attack on Philippine armed forces, public vessels and aircraft will invoke US mutual defense commitments under that treaty," Blinken told a news conference.

<https://edition.cnn.com/2022/08/06/asia/us-defend-philippines-south-china-sea-blinken-hnk-intl/index.html>

4 August 2022: Biden will keep aircraft carrier group in the South China Sea but postpone missile test

President Joe Biden will keep a U.S. naval aircraft carrier strike group in the South China Sea longer than originally planned, in response to Chinese missile tests and heightened aggression around Taiwan, the White House announced Thursday.

<https://www.cnbc.com/2022/08/04/biden-orders-aircraft-carrier-to-stay-in-the-south-china-sea-but-postpones-an-icbm-test.html>

3 August 2022: US, Indonesia hold joint military drills amid China's concerns

More than 5,000 soldiers from Indonesia, the United States and other countries have begun joint combat exercises on the Indonesian island of Sumatra, signalling stronger ties amid growing maritime activity by China in the Indo-Pacific region. The annual military training, known as Garuda Shield, has been taking place since 2009. But this year sees the participation of several other countries, including Australia and Japan, making it the largest ever.

2 August 2022: U.S. Air Force plane headed for Taiwan after South China Sea detour

A U.S. Air Force plane that may include House of Representatives Speaker Nancy Pelosi among its passengers entered the final leg of its journey to Taiwan after departing from Malaysia and taking an extended route that skirted the South China Sea.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/us-jet-that-flew-pelosi-malaysia-departs-kuala-lumpur-2022-08-02/>